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ABSTRACT

The basics of social studies are ill defined because there is little data available on which social studies goals teachers value and which they feel are best achieved. To obtain this data an instrument was developed in two forms. Form A was composed of 25 goal items from five areas in which social studies goals were commonly espoused: citizenship, history, social sciences, issues, and social studies skills. One hundred two semirural elementary and secondary teachers indicated the degree to which they believed each goal should be achieved and the degree to which they are achieved. Form B contained five additional items under the new category "world". Also, teachers were asked to select from 30 goals the ten most important and the ten least important. Form B was given to 153 upper middle class suburban area teachers. High reliabilities were reported and the instrument was deemed useful in identifying teacher perceptions of social studies goals. The findings indicated general agreement concerning social studies goals identified by semirural secondary and elementary teachers. Both suburban and semirural teachers moderately agreed that what should be taught is taught. (BC)

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RANKINGS OF SOCIAL STUDIES GOALS AND PERCEIVED ACHIEVEMENT IN TWO SCHOOL DISTRICTS

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by

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Impressions, assertions, and prescriptions abound, but there is little research which allows for an assessment of the questions, "What social studies goals do teachers value?" and "What social studies goals do teachers believe are best achieved?" The lack of data in this area may well be behind the exclusion of social studies as part of the back-to-basics movement. So long as the literature is silent on normative studies of the relative value of social studies goals, each individual teacher, administrator, parent, and student can assert his set of values as being most worthy. Such an unordered profusion of goals can well be characterized as chaos. In the midst of such an array, basics, if there are any, will evade even the well-meaning observer. Thus it seems that a first order of business must be for social studies educators not only to create new goal statements, but to make choices among goals to determine their relative value.

It appears useful for us then to sample diverse populations to determine what social studies goals are valued. This would enable us to ascertain what the basics in social studies are as perceived by various constituencies.

Once we have determined what it is that social studies should be doing, then we can examine how well teachers are doing it. At present, achievement in the social studies is often measured by a map skills test. Is that all there is to this curriculum area? More thorough and systematic evaluations promise a base from which to proceed in assessing local social studies curricula and moving toward curriculum improvement.

The Problem

Gathering data on the relative importance of various social studies goals should be the object of a series of research efforts. First what is needed is the development of an instrument that will assess those values and perceptions of achievement. Subsequently, the instrument needs to be applied to a variety of populations such as parents, students, businessmen, teachers, and so on.

It is the purpose of this paper to report on the use of such an instrument on two populations of teachers. Analyses will focus on providing information related to the following questions: 1) What social studies goals are valued by elementary and secondary teachers in a semi-rural area adjacent to a mid-size Ohio city (District A)?; What social studies goals are valued by elementary teachers in an upper-middle class suburban area adjacent to a large Ohio city?; 3) Is there any degree of commonality between these districts in the rankings of goals?; 4) How does perceived achievement correlate with the ranked goals?

Specifically, the following hypothesis will be tested in this research study:

1. There is no correlation between the ranks assigned selected social studies goals (should-be items) by elementary and secondary in District A.
2. There is no correlation between the ranked goals (should-be items) and the ranked perceived achievement (as-is) It s in District A.
3. There is no correlation between the ranked goals (should-be items) and the ranked perceived achievement (as-is itmes) in District B.
4. There is no correlation between the ranked goals (should be items) of Districts A and B.
5. There is no correlation between the ranked perceived achievement (as-is) items in Districts A and B.

Procedure

The first phase of this research involved development of the research instrument (described more fully in the subsequent section). For this first version, Form A, was also developed a standardized set of directions. Both the instrument and directions were duplicated and given to administrators and selected teachers who in turn administered it to all elementary teachers in grades 1 - 6 assigned to regular classrooms and all secondary social studies teachers.

Data on Form A were tallied by the school district clerical staff who computed sums of scores and means. On the basis of these means, goals (should-be data) were ranked from high to low. Similarly, estimated achievement (as-is) data were ranked from high to low. A Pearson product moment correlation was used to determine the relationship among ranked sets of data.

Almost a year later, Form B was developed based on extensive use of Form A. This new instrument and directions were duplicated and given to selected administrators and teachers in District B who in turn administered Form B to those elementary teachers in grades 1 - 6 assigned to regular classrooms and who attended the administration session. Sums of scores, means, and standard deviations were computed for each goal (should-be items) and achievement (as-is items). Goals were ranked according to means from highest to lowest as were the estimated achievement data. In addition, the added section provided data on the ten most and least important goals. The first category (most important) was assigned a value of 3, the last a value of 1. Goals not listed in either category were assigned a value of 2. The mean ranks of these goals were ascertained.

Data gathered from Form A were used to determine the correlation between elementary and secondary should-be and as-is ranks in District A. Data gathered from Form B were used to ascertain the correlation between should-be and as-is ranks in District B as well as between should-be ranks based on means and ranks based on the added most/least important procedure. Correlations between the school districts were computed by deleting those items on Form B which were not common with those on Form A.

Description of the Instrument

Form A

A review of the literature uncovered no available instrument which would yield a relative ranking of selected social studies goals. Many goal statements were found. Sometimes, however, the same or similar goals would appear in modified garb within the same listing.[5] At other times statements were

found which included not only goals, but also materials, financial support of the social studies program, student participation, and many other factors. Statements found in one goal set were often absent from others.

An analysis of these data indicated that there were no less than five areas in which social studies goals were commonly espoused. These were identified as: Citizenship, History, Social Sciences, Issues, and Social Studies Skills. Five items were developed within each of these categories and thus' comprised the 25 item instrument.

In order to gather data on the relative value of a goal and the degree to which it was perceived as being attained, a specialized format was employed. This format required the respondee to react to each statement two times, once to indicate the degree to which he/she believed the goal should be achieved and the degree to which it is achieved (as-is) within the school district. The alternatives ranged from strongly agree, agree, and no opinion, or neutral, to disagree, and strongly agree. Numerical values of 5 to 1 were assigned respectively to these alternatives.

Form A was employed with District A. The reliability of this instrument (Chronbach's alpha) was .75 for should-be sequence and .84 for the as-is portion.

Form B

When compiling the data from Form A, the researcher became aware of a data void in the area of the 'World.' To compensate for this, five additional items were developed in this category. On Form B, therefore, there was a total of 30 items. The reliability of this form (Chronbach's alpha) was .83.

To Form B was also added another section. Respondees were asked to select from the 30 goals the ten which they would consider most important. They were also asked to select those which they would consider least important. Goals not selected were, therefore, considered as important. Those designated as most important were assigned a value of 3, important 2, and least important 1. Mean values of each goal were ascertained and the goals subsequently ranked.

Form B was only administered in District B. When comparisons were made between districts, World items and the separate ranking procedure were deleted thus virtually making the data of the two districts comparable. As a validity check, goals ranked by this procedure were compared with those ranked by listing the should-be means from high to low. The resulting correlation was .87 thus supporting the use of the ranked means as a valid measure of goal preferences.

Demographics and the Sample

School District A is located in northeastern Ohio and is adjacent to a medium size city. While some areas of District A could be classified as suburban, much of its area would also be considered rural. The total number of students in the District is approximately 4,000. Less than five percent of the student body consists of minority students. The total number of elementary teachers in five schools is approximately 95. The total number of junior high teachers in two schools is 60 but only five are assigned to teaching social studies. The total number of high school teachers is 71, only seven of which teaches social studies. All of the elementary teachers in regular classrooms in grades one through six and those secondary teachers who teach social studies were potential respondees to the instrument. Only those who attended the instrument administration session are included in this study. In all, 90 elementary, 5 junior high, and 7 senior high teachers completed the instrument (Form A).

School District B is also located in northeastern Ohio and is a medium size city. While the major portion of this city consists of residential areas, it does include many commercial areas. No heavy industries are to be found in District A. Residential areas will range from rather modest single and two-family dwellings to very expensive single family dwellings, from modest apartment living to luxury apartment accommodations. The total number of students enrolled in the elementary schools is almost 3500. Some of these schools enroll a minority population which is greater than twenty percent. The total number

of elementary teachers is approximately 200. Only those teachers of regular classrooms from grades one through six who attended the administration session are respondees to Form B. One hundred fifty-three completed instruments were returned.

The data for District A are found in Table 1. The first hypothesis to be tested by these data is:

1. There is no correlation between the ranks assigned selected social studies goals (should-be items) by elementary and secondary teachers in school district A.

A visual inspection of the elementary and secondary should-be ranks indicated agreement on the first and third ranked items and not too dissimilar rankings on the first ten items. The computed correlation between these data was .91 which is significant beyond the .01 level. The first hypothesis must, therefore, be rejected. The correlation between elementary and secondary social studies goal preferences appears to be very strong.

Using the total ranked should-be and as-is data for District A allows one to test the second hypothesis:

2. There is no correlation between the ranked goals (should-be items) and the ranked perceived achievement (as-is items) in District A.

Visual inspection of the data certainly raised doubts about the existence of such a relationship. The computed correlation between the should-be and as-is data was .46 which is significant at the .01 level. On the basis of this data, hypotheses two is rejected. In rejecting this hypothesis, however, it must be noted that while a significant correlation has been observed, only slightly more than 21% the variance is accounted for by this relationship. Seventy-nine percent is not accounted for. Thus one should suspect a wide discrepancy between valued goals and their achievement. There are many examples to be found in the data in which ranks on should-be and as-is items vary by an interval of, let us arbitrarily choose, nine or more.

In the following list one can observe apparent overachievement in relation to goals in District A.

Item	Should-be rank	As-is rank	Description
20	18	7	ancient cultures
8	21	4	causes--Rev. War
2	24.5	3	New World explorers
11	22	5	making maps
5	11	1	interpret map keys
26	24.5	12	Am. history dates

Similarly, the following appear to be considerably underachieved.

Item	Should-be rank	As-is rank	Description
17	1	10	fact, non-fact, . . .
13	2	15	form intel. opinion
23	7	22	analyze soc. probs.
22	6	20	social action
27	15	25	increase money supply

Findings

District B

The data for District B are found in Table 2. The first hypotheses to be tested by these data is hypothis #3:

3. There is no correlation between the ranked goals (should-be items) and the ranked perceived achievement (as-is items) in District B.

Visual review of the data suggested there might be a modest correlation which was born out by the computed r of .69. On the basis of these data hypotheses #3 was rejected at the .01 level.

By employing the data from both districts A and B, one can test hypothesis #4:

4. There is no correlation between the ranked goals (should-be data) of

TABLE I

RANKED GOALS (SHOULD-BE ITEMS)
FOR DISTRICTS A AND B

Item Description	Item No.*	RANK District A	RANK District B
to be able to separate fact, non-fact, and opinion	17	1	1
to be able to form an intelligent opinion on current problems	13	2	4.5
to read the front page of the newspaper with understanding	4	3	3
to reduce prejudice in oneself	7	4	2
to be able to infer cause and effect	29	5	6
to know how to take effective social action for change	22	6	13
to apply social principles in the analysis of social problems	23	7	11
to know the cause and effects of recession, pol. corruption. . .	16	8	8
to know the mechanics of voting	19	9	10.5
to know the background struggle of blacks...and other minorities	10	10	4.5
to be able to interpret maps with keys	5	11	7
to know ethical and unethical acts of public officials	1	12	9
to study history before current problems	28	13	19
to follow directions obediently	25	14	10.5
to know how government increases the supply of money	27	15	21
to learn 20th century history before earlier history	14	16	18
to learn the basic laws and principles of the social sciences	15	17	25
to know the contributions of ancient cultures to our own	20	18	14
to know how social scientists gather data	9	19	22
to know the structures of the social sciences	3	20	16
to know the major causes of the Revolutionary War	8	21	15
to have experiences in making maps	11	22	20
to know the contents of the amendments to the Constitution	21	23	23
to know the major explorers of the New World	2	24.5	17
to know the dates of major events in American history	26	24.5	24

*Item numbers refer to the revised instrument. Thus items 6, 12, 18, 24, and 30 are excluded since these appear only on the revised form.

Districts A and B.

Informal review of the data indicates that both districts selected item #17 for first rank, item #4 for third rank, and that many other items are exactly or closely ranked. The computed r of .83 indicated that the hypothesis must be rejected.

This rejection of Hypothesis #4 suggests to a large degree (r = .83) a considerable overlap in the value placed on specific social studies goals in District A and B. It, therefore, appears meaningful to identify the substance of these goals.

From Table 1 it can be seen that there is considerable agreement on the first five objectives (should-be items). Two of these are skills (17 and 29) while two others fall into the area of citizenship as designated on the instrument (13, 7) and item 4 refers to issues. The remaining citizenship items appear in the first half of the rankings (19, 1, 25). Four of the five skill items are ranked 11 or better. Only 'experiences in map making' (11) is ranked low (23). Four of the five issue items receive a ranking of 10 or better. Only one, which can be considered a negation of issues or as necessary background for understanding them is ranked 13 or 19.

On the other hand, traditional history items are found from 15th to 25th (24.5) ranks. The least traditional history item, learning 20th century history before earlier history, received the highest ranking in this category (item 14, rank 16 or 18). Similarly the social science items ranged from 15th to 23rd ranks.

In testing the final hypotheses, one must refer to the data gathered on teachers' perceptions of how well each objective is being achieved by the school district (as-is data). These are reported in Table 2.

Hypothesis #5: There is no correlation between ranked perceived achievement (as-is) items in Districts A and B.

Visual inspection of the data leads us to suspect that this hypothesis will be rejected since there are many instances of exact or very similar rankings of

TABLE 2

RANKED AS-IS (ACHIEVEMENT) ITEMS
FOR DISTRICTS A AND B

Item Description	Item No.*	RANK District A	RANK District B
to be able to interpret maps with keys	5	1	1
to reduce prejudice in oneself	7	2	6
to know the major explorers of the New World	2	3	2
to know the major causes of the Revolutionary War	8	4	3.5
to have experiences in making maps	11	5	10
to know the background struggle of blacks ...and other minorities	10	6	9
to know the contributions of ancient cultures to our own	20	7	8
to be able to read the front page of the newspaper with understanding	4	8	3.5
to study history before current problems	28	9	17
to be able to separate fact, non-fact and opinion	17	10	5
to know the dates of major events in American History	26	11	11
to infer cause and effect	29	12	7
to follow directions obediently	25	13	13
to be able to form an intelligent opinion	13	15	12
to know the causes and effects of recession, political corruption. . .	16	15	18
to know the ethical and unethical acts of public officials	1	15	14
to know the mechanics of voting	19	17	15
to learn 20th century history before earlier history	14	18	22
to know the structures of the social sciences	3	19	23
to know how to take effective social action for change	22	20	20
to know how social scientists gather data	9	21	21
to apply social principles in the analysis of social problems	23	22	16
to learn the basic laws and principles of the social sciences	15	23.5	24
to know the contents of the amendments to the Constitution	21	23.5	25
to know how government increases the supply of money	27	25	19

*Item numbers refer to the revised instrument. Thus items 6, 12, 18, 24, and 30 are excluded since these appear only on the revised form which was only used in District B.

items. The computed correlation coefficient was .87. Thus the hypothesis was rejected at the .01 level. Rejection of this hypothesis indicates that one must suspect a great similarity between what is taught in social studies in these two very different school districts located some 60 miles apart from one another. District B appears to provide less emphasis upon map-making, history, recent history, and the structure of the social sciences. District B provides more emphasis upon reading the front page of the newspaper with understanding, separating fact, non-fact, and opinion, the application of social principles in the analysis of social problems, inferring cause and effect, and in knowing how the money supply is increased. Reducing prejudice in oneself apparently achieved more in District A than B; District A, however, has a very small minority population while District B has a relatively large minority group. Many explanations of these data are possible but none, obviously, can, at this point, be definitive. It may be that prejudice appears to be reduced more effectively in that district which has a lower potential for daily minority-majority interaction and potential conflict. Similarly, knowledge of the struggle of minorities may appear to be less fully attained in a district where a larger minority group becomes vocal in voicing this need.

Discussions and Conclusions

The findings of this study seem to indicate a large area of agreement concerning social studies goals identified by secondary and elementary teachers in school district A. If this finding is supported by other studies, then it appears possible to identify with greater clarity the role of social studies in grades K - 12 and to move toward better articulated social studies curricula.

The findings indicate that there is but modest agreement within district A (hypothesis 2) concerning what should-be taught and what is achieved in social studies. District B while evidencing a higher degree of correlation (hypothesis #3) on these two factors, still showed areas of incongruence. On the basis of these two districts, one could conclude that there is a modest

correlation between desired social studies goals and actual achievement in Districts A and B. The degree to which this speaks for the status of social studies education in general will need to be verified by future studies.

Not only are elementary and secondary teachers in District A rather similar in their goal ranks, the elementary teachers in Districts A and B also evidence a high degree of agreement. Additional studies may be helpful in focusing on the perceived role of social studies and go a long way in establishing this curriculum area as a "basic" area of the school curriculum. Additional studies, however, will need to be conducted with a representative sample of parents, students, and general community members before this process can be brought to a meaningful closure.

The degree of correlation between the as-is rankings of the two school districts seems to indicate a considerable degree of conformity. Additional studies should be conducted to see if this is true of other districts within and without the state.

The discrepancy between the ranked should-be and the as-is items in District A certainly helps identify the need for curriculum change. A similar but less extreme discrepancy in District B is also helpful in the curriculum change process.

Substantively, it was noted that discrepancies seem to favor 'traditional' areas such as names and dates, map making and so on to the exclusion of more highly valued social studies objectives. The area of the social sciences, although much stressed in the professional literature during the last fifteen years, is least valued or achieved in either district. Items loosely identified as citizenship, and others tagged as social studies skills and issues are rather highly valued. History items are generally found in the lower two-fifths of the rankings.

The research instrument employed in this study appears to be effective in identifying social studies goals, preferences, and perceived levels of achievement. It seems to reveal much data which can be useful in social studies curriculum study and modification. Through this instrument two districts were

observed to have valued goals which were, to varying degrees, being achieved by the social studies programs in effect in their school districts.

Through employing such a social studies instrument, it appears possible to establish perceptions of what are the 'basics' in social studies. This is a useful step which can only focus the now diffused missions of social studies. Too, this instrument appears able of identifying the K-12 mission of social studies within a single school district and thus enhancing the potential of articulation.

While this study is in no way definitive, it certainly does shed light upon the social studies goals valued by two school districts. It also sheds light on the relationship of perceptions of achievement and their congruence with these goals.